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Future Force

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS

The Commandant's Direction states, "our ability to attract, develop, retain, and deploy a diverse, highly capable, and flexible workforce is the key to the Coast Guard's future"; this remains my top priority as well and is perhaps our greatest challenge.

One of the Coast Guard's most successful approaches to meeting our workforce challenges has been cultivation of long-standing partnerships with the National Naval Officers Association (NNOA), the Association of Naval Services Officers (ANSO), and the Women Officer's Professional Association (WOPA). These organizations share our vision for a diverse, highly capable workforce. Each organization has consistently demonstrated its ability to incorporate innovative ideas in outreach/recruiting, training, professional development, and are staunch advocates for retaining the best and brightest members. Our service has greatly benefited from the efforts of members affiliated with these organizations.

The National Naval Officers' Association's (NNOA) proactive outreach to schools, churches, and community organizations, particularly in African American communities, has proven to be a force multiplier for our marketing and recruiting efforts. Through NNOA's outreach efforts, young men and women from all walks of life received their first introduction to the Coast Guard and are made aware of the opportunities available to them. Likewise, highly successful Coast Guard recruiting and retention initiatives such as the Pre-Enlisted Program for Enlisted Personnel (PPEP), and the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI) grew out of recommendations from NNOA. Just last year a new NNOA/Coast Guard Academy partnership was created with the vision of increasing the number of minority students in the cadet corps. Under the leadership of NNOA's Coast Guard representative, a network of NNOA volunteers was organized around the country.

Each year NNOA hosts a Professional Development and Training Conference with over 20 hours of educational and professional development workshops and seminars designed to enhance the attendee's knowledge while increasing their awareness of current and emerging issues that impact the careers of sea service officers (Coast Guard, Navy, and Marine Corps). Last year's Coast Guard breakout sessions included briefings/discussions on Deepwater, the transition to the Department of Homeland Security, and Back to Basics Skills for Junior Officer Success. During the Commandant's address to conference attendees, he congratulated NNOA for "telling it like it is, and challenging the Coast Guard to improve." At the end of the Conference, one majority member (O6) commented - "Best leadership training I've received in 22 years!"

The 2004 NNOA Professional Development and Training Conference will be held 2-6 August, at the Naval Support Activity Mid-South, in Millington, Tennessee. For more information on NNOA's history and mission, as well as the 2004 conference go to www.nnoa.org <<http://www.nnoa.org>>.

Other Links

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

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Military Locator

The Association of Naval Services Officers (ANSO) is the premier Hispanic organization promoting the recruitment, retention, and career potential of Hispanic officers and enlisted members of the naval services. ANSO's mission is to assist the Sea Services in attracting Hispanic candidates for their officer programs, and to raise the quality of Hispanic Sea Services Personnel through mentoring networking, and education so that they can compete successfully, as individuals, throughout their military careers.

ANSO supported the assignment of a Coast Guard officer as a representative to the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) which has enhanced our visibility in the Hispanic community and improved our ability to recruit highly qualified Hispanic officers.

The ANSO Annual Conference is a training opportunity on topics such as leadership, career development, mentorship, current initiatives affecting Hispanics, and a myriad of other subjects. Both civilian and high ranking military speakers who have first hand experience in these areas facilitate the discussions. Although these topics are of special interest to Hispanics serving in the naval services, they are useful to officers and enlisted personnel of any background.

For information on this year's Annual Conference being held on April 18-23, refer to ALCOAST 059/04 or www.ansomil.org <<http://www.ansomil.org>>.

Women Officers' Professional Association (WOPA) began as an informal organization in 1978. Originally known as the Women Officers' Professional Network, the organization hosted luncheons featuring prominent speakers and representatives of organizations whose policies affected women of the sea services. Today WOPA serves as a forum for the exchange of information. WOPA includes the following goals: Fostering, and encouraging the educational and professional development of women; providing forums for discussion of common issues and concerns affecting women in military career fields; promoting career planning for women servicemembers in the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard; and providing educational materials concerning matters of interest to women in the sea service.

The 2004 WOPA Annual Conference will be held 20-21 July 2004 at Fort Leslie J. McNair, Washington, DC. For more information on WPOA, as well as the 2004 conference, go to www.wopa.org <<http://www.wopa.org>>.

Each of these organizations strives to help its members succeed in their respective service. While each originally was formed and has as its main focus helping minority populations succeed (African-Americans, Hispanics, and Women respectively), each is open to all and all three are truly exceptional career and professional development opportunities, through local chapter activities, annual conferences, and symposiums. The annual conferences attract top-level service leaders for remarks and frank discussions with attendees. The annual conferences provide discussions on overall service direction, as well as superb workshops on career and professional development. NNOA, ANSO and WOPA serve as forums to bring critical personnel issues to the services' top leadership and develop important issue papers for the service chiefs. Many of the issues raised have been instrumental in improving the workplace environment for all members of the Coast Guard Family.

I encourage all of you to take advantage of the opportunities provided by these professional organizations.

Regards,

RADM Kenneth T. Venuto
Ken Venuto

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